

The Ross Complex had some very unusual activity in early February. A SWAT team (Special Weapons and Tactics) from the Vancouver Police Department held a simulation and training exercise in the Dittmer Control Center.

Local police, FBI, hostage negotiators and BPA security took part, with other BPA folks who observed. The exercise took place from 6 p.m. until about midnight. The team ran through four different scenarios of responses to hostages or armed threats.

The training was held after routine work hours to minimize disruption in the workplace. No live weapons or ammunition were used. And the dispatch and scheduling areas were excluded.

A group of 16 high school students from Vancouver and some BPA employees at Dittmer played the roles of hostages. BPA security specialist Pete Jeter and Dana Jensen of financial analysis played the bad guys.

While SWAT team members moved to secure corridors in Dittmer, law officials set up their command post in the nearby DOB-1 building. Marge Nelson, vice president for Transmission's management and services, sat in the DOB-1 debriefing session at the end.

Jeter says the exercise at Dittmer came about after Vancouver police had been there for the Y2K rollover on

Dittmer gets SWAT-ed

New Year's Day. "They thought Dittmer would be an excellent training ground for their SWAT unit," he says. So he worked with the Vancouver department to set up the Feb. 2 exercise.

Jeter says, "It provided a realistic training opportunity for them



Ross exhibit covers African American culture and contributions

Clara Tyson works in Shared Services at the Ross Complex. As Transmission continues to adjust its work groups and areas, Tyson's property management group has moved a few times in as many years. Each year, wherever her work group is during February, Tyson sets up her own African American displays for Black History month.

This year Tyson is at the Construction Services Building. Her group is right off the atrium in the basement – a perfect place for several displays. So Tyson set up several tables that show African American culture, history and contributions.

One table had a photo gallery of African Americans in sports. Another had magazine covers and books by or about African Americans. A civil rights and slavery table had books and articles on those subjects.

One table was devoted to medicine, science and discovery. It had newspaper articles blown up, books and photos of African American contributions in those fields. There was also a table on African Americans in music and the arts.

Two interesting displays that quickly attracted attention were a table with African artifacts and

mementos and a long display of prominent African Americans on U.S. postage stamps.

The artifact table included African masks, swords and other items, and books. Tyson says her son, Kevin, collects the cultural items and provided them. The postage stamp display included blow-ups of most of the 65 stamps issued that have had prominent African Americans.

The first U.S. stamp with a black person was a 10-cent stamp in 1940 that had Booker T. Washington on it. The latest African American to be on a stamp is Patricia Roberts Harris early this year.

Tyson puts up her Black history displays at BPA, "out of a love for our culture and past." And a desire to share the knowledge of it with others. "It's important for people to know their history," she says.

Tyson says she began to teach her children at home, "because they didn't teach much about Blacks in school in those years and I wanted my children to know their history." She says, "I want my children and my grandchildren to know that they have a very rich history."



Shellie Dunbar and Nancy Wallschlaeger look over a postage stamp exhibit of famous African Americans (top). Below, Clara Tyson discusses African artifacts with a visitor. Tyson set up half a dozen tables with African American displays for Black History Month. Her exhibits lined the atrium of the Construction Services Building at the Ross Complex.

Photos by Jack Odgaard

We can end racism, Black leaders say

Half a dozen people spoke at BPA's kickoff of Black History Month in February. The theme of this year's observance was African American legacy and challenges of the 21st century. BPA's African American resource group sponsored several events during the month.

Main speakers at the kickoff were Jim Hill and Margaret Carter. Hill served 10 years in the legislature and is now Oregon state treasurer. He is currently president of the National Association of State Treasurers. He serves on the board of the Northwest Health Foundation and is a former board member of Portland's Urban League.



The Black History Month kickoff at Portland had several speakers. (Left) Former state legislator Margaret Carter chats with COO Steve Hickok during the event. (Right) Oregon State Treasurer Jim Hill talked about racism that still exists.

Carter is a former state legislator who served seven terms in the house. She has been a counselor at Portland Community College for 25 years. She founded the Workforce



2000 Act that provided for skill centers at community colleges. She is now interim executive director for the Urban League of Portland.

Hill said, "We all have a responsibility to bring racism to an end. It's not just something that happened in the past. Now we all must be sure that the things Dr. (Martin Luther) King (Jr.) stood for become a reality."

Carter said, "It's not so much that individuals today are racist, but the system is that way. It's how they are designed." She said, "We must get to the place where the color of one's skin is as trivial as the color of one's eyes."

Carter gave an example of "where we have our priorities screwed up. It costs \$37,000 to house a boy or young man in prison," she said. "But for \$40,000 you can get a Harvard education. I'll give them the difference," she said.

Photos by Jack Odgaard